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Strengthening Higher Education Space in Tanzania through North-South Partnerships and Links: Experiences from the University of Dar es Salaam
Renforcer l'espace d'enseignement supérieur en Tanzanie grâce à des partenariats Nord-Sud et des liens : Expériences de l'Université de Dar es Salaam

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Abstract

Government cuts in research and development funding for public universities in Tanzania have compelled these institutions to establish and develop extensive partnerships and links with universities and research centers in the North. The establishment of the North-South partnerships has also coincided with the dominance and heavy dependence on external donors for research funding and development activities in the majority of Tanzania public universities. Using the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), a public university as example, this article seeks to examine whether partnerships make any significant contribution to the institution's capacity building. The thesis of this paper is that although North-South partnerships are instrumental in institutional capacity building, they have not significantly contributed to the strengthening of higher education space at UDSM and apparently at other public universities in Tanzania because of the inherent structural imbalances and inequalities embedded in the partnerships.

Résumé

Les compressions budgétaires du gouvernement dans le financement de la recherche et du développement pour les universités publiques en Tanzanie ont contraint ces institutions à établir et à développer de nombreux partenariats et des liens avec des universités et des centres de recherche du Nord. La mise en place des partenariats Nord-Sud a également coïncidé avec la domination et la forte dépendance sur des donneurs externes pour le financement de la recherche et les activités de développement dans la majorité des universités publiques en Tanzanie. Utilisant à titre d'exemple l'Université de Dar es Salaam (UDSM), une université publique, cet article cherche à examiner si ces partenariats apportent une quelconque contribution significative au renforcement des capacités de l'institution. La thèse de cet article est que, quoique les partenariats Nord-Sud jouent un rôle dans le renforcement des capacités de l'institution, ils n'ont pas contribué de manière significative à raffermir l'espace de l'enseignement supérieur à l'UDSM, et apparemment dans d'autres universités publiques en Tanzanie, en raison des déséquilibres et inégalités inhérents, structurels, ancrés dans les partenariats.

Key words: partnerships, higher education space; Tanzania; capacity building

Mots clés: partenariats; espace d'enseignement supérieur; Tanzanie; renforcement des capacités

Introduction

Academic partnerships and links are construed by African universities as key strategies for capacity building, and international cooperation between North and South universities. Partnerships are, in practice, considered an integral part of institutional management structures. Almost every African public university maintains a unit or a full directorate to deal with partnerships and links as part of the central university management. For example, at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), the focus of this study, a new full directorate charged with university-wide international relations, partnerships and links was recently created in the *UDSM Vision 2061*, ostensibly to accord partnerships and links with the status and role they deserve in the internationalization of the University. This new directorate is a part of the central university administration under the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration.

Other public universities in Tanzania have also established similar units to deal with international partnerships and links within their management and administrative structures.

There is an underlying assumption that these partnerships are instrumental in strengthening higher education space through research capacity building and academic staff development, and they are mutually beneficial, balanced, durable and empowering. Indeed, UDSM's redefined functions of partnerships are also based on the same suppositions: "to establish mutually negotiated, beneficial and durable links with institutions of higher learning and research nationally, regionally and globally" (Mshoro, Galabawa, Baregu, Chijoriga, Kombe, & Toba, 2007, p. 3). While the above assumption tends to portray a rosy picture of partnerships and links in African universities, some hard realities are not openly acknowledged in the current literature.

This article explores the realities of partnerships in Tanzania public universities and the implications for strengthening higher education space. Partnerships in African public universities have inherent systemic shortcomings and imbalances, which I argue, limits their impact on strengthening higher education space. This article is divided into five sections: First, I provide a brief overview of partnerships in African public universities. Then, I outline the conceptual framework for this study, followed by the methodology and findings about partnerships at the UDSM in Tanzania. The final section of the paper analyzes these findings in light of the conceptual framework. In the conclusion, I will provide some recommendations for how partnerships can strengthen higher education space in Tanzania public universities. The main argument is that while partnerships in African public universities are critical strategies for the internationalization of higher education, they have not significantly contributed to the strengthening of higher education capacity because of their inherent structural imbalances and shortcomings.

Partnerships, Links and Capacity Building: Definitions

Partnerships in higher education in this article are understood to be mutual collaborations between two higher education institutions that should be beneficial to both partners in the North and South. Examples of higher education partnerships as categorized by Kot (2016) include collaborative research, staff exchange, student exchange, knowledge and information exchange, teaching and curriculum development, and professional development for staff. Higher education partnerships may also cover conferences and workshops, student training, infrastructural development, and socio-economic development. Samoff and Carroll (cited in Kot, 2016) identified four types of partnerships¹ which are dominant in African universities, including the UDSM: university-level partnerships, department/faculty partnerships, multiple-inter-university partnerships, and partnerships among scholars. Links are normally established between departments or schools; for example, the Departments of Economics and Education at the UDSM have for several years maintained links with the Department of Economics at Lund University's (Sweden) and the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta (Canada). These links have enabled a good number of academic staff in the two departments to pursue doctoral studies at these institutions.

The question I ask in this study is—To what extent have partnerships and links strengthened higher education space in terms of capacity building? Strengthening higher education space in this context is defined in terms of institutional capacity building which refers to academic staff development and retention, increased student enrollment, increased research outputs (research reports, articles published in peer reviewed journals, book chapters published by reputed academic

¹Partnership in the context of this study is defined as an academic link or one-way collaboration which in many cases benefits Global South universities, enabling them to send their academic staff for graduate training and related activities in the Global North universities

publishers), expansion of educational higher education infrastructures and enhanced academic freedom.

Partnerships in African Public Universities: Contexts and Rationales

The recent expansion of partnerships and links between African public universities and Global North higher education institutions should be understood in the wider context of declining state funding of public universities in Africa. This decline has made international partnerships and links critical to the economic survival of many public universities in Africa because they compensate for the declining government funding on research and development. Although declining state funding of public universities is a global phenomenon, it has become critical in Africa in recent times due to economic crises facing many countries. For example, as Shantayanan, Monga, and Zongo (2011) observe when citing the World Bank (2010), between 1991 and 2006, Africa experienced a 30% decline in the volume of current public expenditure per student. At the UDSM, state funding declined from 93.2% in 2000/2001 to 42% in 2009/2010. Documentary evidence shows that a large number of partnerships in African public universities have been initiated by the United States and the United Kingdom (Kot, 2015). Notable US partnerships initiatives with African public universities include the Partnerships for Higher Education in Africa, a 10-year partnership (2000–2010) launched by US private foundations to strengthen higher education in nine African countries, and the Africa-US Higher Education Initiative, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Kot, 2016, p. 42). The US dominance in partnerships with African universities is likely to continue because US universities, foundations, and donor agencies believe that "without stronger higher education, the continents' development prospects will remain bleak" (Kot, 2016, p. 42).

There are other important higher education partnerships launched by the United Kingdom focusing (among other things) on African universities. For example, the Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DePHE) (2005-2013) and the creation of the African Unit within the Association of Commonwealth Universities. DePHE, supported by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), aimed at helping African higher education institutions develop partnerships with UK-based universities and universities based in the South. Its goal was to deliver specific results in the following areas: joint research studies/publications, revision to or development of new courses relevant to the needs of a country, professional development and staff training, increase practical support to gender parity, improve networking between higher education institutions, and to make management and administration of institutions more effective (DePHE, 2005). The Africa Unit at the Association of Commonwealth Universities was created to enhance and facilitate UK-Africa Higher Education Institutions partnerships among other functions.

Other players in international partnerships with African universities include the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), which recently launched a five-year (2015-2020) partnership that aims at improving tertiary-level teaching and research, and strengthening institutional development in Africa, and the European University Association (Kot, 2016, p. 41). In 2010, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) in collaboration with the Association of African Universities (AAU) also launched a partnership program known as *Strengthening Higher Education Stakeholder Relations in Africa* (SHESRA) which resulted in the formation of 27 new university-industry partnerships in Africa and Canada. This three-year project supported by the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has three strategic objectives: strengthening African university outreach, strengthening university-industry linkages, and strengthening the AAU stakeholder relations (AUCC, 2010). All of the above

large-scale international partnerships in African public universities have one common characteristic—they are all exclusively donor-funded, hence relegating African universities to the position of recipients.

Apart from the financial rationale, there are also other reasons that compel African public universities to build partnerships with other universities in the North. These reasons are based on potential benefits, including the possible contribution to the growth and development of higher education in Africa through the development of the institution and its infrastructure. As Samoff andCarrol (2004) stated, "from the African perspective, the high priority goal for an international partnership is the development of the institution and its infrastructure" (p. 31). On the other hand, literature and documentary reviews indicate that North universities seek out partnerships with African (South) public universities as part of the objectives for international cooperation and development or foreign aid.Partnerships are also perceived by northern partners, "as having the potential to help revitalize the role of African universities in their societies, re-conceptualize African academic institutions as 'public good', revitalize African knowledge systems and reinvigorate research capacity in African universities" (Kot, 2016, p. 43).

Potential Benefits of Partnerships

Kot's study (2016) clearly identified two major types of perceived benefits from partnerships between African universities and Global North universities: institutional benefits and personal benefits. Institutional benefits include institutional capacity building, academic effectiveness and internationalization, while personal or private benefits include academic, cultural, economic and strategic benefits. These benefits are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Perceived Institutional and Personal Benefits from International Partnerships in Africa

Institutional Benefits	Personal Benefits
<i>1. Institutional capacity building</i>	<i>1. Academic benefits</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make institution more responsive to social needs • Improve infrastructure • Increase institutional revenue • Improve institutional management • Attract teaching & research staff • Create more academic programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new ways of learning & teaching • Develop creative ways of solving problems • Improve research skills
<i>2. Academic effectiveness</i>	<i>2. Cultural benefits</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen research • Improve the quality of higher education • Introduce new ways of teaching • Bring innovation into curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication in foreign language • Improve understanding of other cultures • Increase understanding of other cultures • Increase understanding of own culture • Learn a new language
<i>3. Internationalization</i>	<i>3. Economic benefits</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make students more internationally oriented • Make faculty more internationally oriented • Attract foreign students • Increase institutional prestige 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire educational resources • Gain extra financial support
	<i>4. Strategic benefits</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network with foreign scholars • Develop consultancy skills

Source: Adapted from Kot, 2016, pp. 47& 50-52.

Potential benefits of North-South partnerships in African public universities have also been outlined by Nakabugo, Barrett and Munk (2010), and Akuni, Mdee and Thorley (2012). These include contributing to solving capacity challenges and other challenges facing African higher education; providing African scholars with mechanisms to keep in touch with rapidly changing knowledge through contact with the rest of the world and information sharing; providing cost effective means for specialized training and skill formation not viable at the national level; enhancing human and infrastructural capacity; and contributing to the of Southern partners into international exchanges. Other potential benefits of partnerships include sharing of resources and skills, enabling partners (particularly in the Global South) to enhance their professional credibility through publishing international peer-reviewed journals and presentation at international fora, and providing opportunities for international professional interaction through the promotion of academic mobility from Global South to Global North and vice versa.

Conceptual Framework

North-South partnerships in African universities need to be considered within the historical and political framework, and the economic relationship with the West since Africa's independence in the 1960s. Hinged on neo-colonialism, this relationship has remained imbalanced and exploitative, and has been in favour of the Global North. Higher education partnerships operate within neo-colonial structures, which have perpetuated resource dependence on the Global North by African countries and their public universities, despite economic self-reliance proclamations made by some countries. For example, in Tanzania, despite claims of economic self-reliance in 1967, foreign aid contribution to the national budget remains high at almost 30% in 2009/2010 (Policy Forum, 2010).

This reliance on foreign aid need to be understood within the broader context of the globalization of higher education which has contributed to the marketization and corporatization of the university, and corresponding declining government funding for research and development. Declining state funding of African public universities has compelled these institutions to depend on external donors for funding of some of the core university functions such as research and development and capital development expenditures.

Post-colonial theory helps explain why partnerships between Global North higher education institutions and Global South higher education institutions have not effectively contributed to the strengthening of higher education space. The theory posits that power asymmetries between Global North and Global South facilitate the dominance of Northern interests in development partnerships. In a similar context, King (2009) also argues that asymmetries of power between Global North and Global South result in the displacement of the local agenda in favour of projects (partnerships) designed and directed by the Northern partner (higher education) institutions. In fact, North-South partnerships in African public universities are viewed as "reproductions of traditional patterns of economic and geographical dependency" (Jowi, 2012, p. 51).

Methodology

This article adopts a qualitative research approach drawing on my personal experience of working with UDSM as academician and researcher who has participated in donor funded North-South research partnerships, donor-funded research and consultancies. For example, I was a Senior Guest Researcher in the Nile Basin Research Programme at the University of Bergen (2009), a

North-South program funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²Data were mainly collected through documentary reviews and anecdotal evidence. The selection of the UDSM has been largely purposive, influenced by the fact that the institution is the oldest public university in Tanzania with several active donor-funded partnerships and links at different levels dating back to its establishment in 1970.

Two primary documents were reviewed, and from which pertinent data were extracted from: *A register of memorandum of understanding* (MoU) describing different MoUs on UDSM partnerships and links (2003-2012), and a *List of universities/institutions in various parts of the world with which the University of Dar es Salaam has cooperation and links* (2007-2012) obtained from the Directorate of Planning and Finance and the International Relations Office at the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Campus. Table 2 summarizes the selected MoUs reviewed.

Table 2
Selected UDSM North-South Partnerships MoUs, 2003-2012

MoU Number	Particulars
2005/MoU/SU/03 UDSM & Oslo University	UDSM & Oslo University on establishing a joint research and educational projects & programmes, student and staff exchange
2006/MoU/SSE/07	UDSM & University of Ghana-Students and staff exchange
2007/MoU/SSE/08	UDSM and Korea University on research, exchange undergraduate and graduate students and staff, exchange of information and publications
2008/MoU/SSE/14	Cooperation between UDSM and University College Dublin on joint supervision of doctoral students, research, staff/student exchange and exchange of information and publications
2009/MoU/SSE/15	UDSM & Texas Southern University in research development, training and technology transfer
2010/MoU/SSE/24	UDSM and the Governors of the University of Alberta establishment of staff mobility and student mobility framework, research seminars and exchange of academic materials
2010/MoU/SSE/28	Cooperation between the Institute of Kiswahili Studies and University of Vienna
2011/MoU/SSE/42 (UDBS)	UDSM & Business Academy Aarhus, Denmark
2011/MoU/SSE/48	UDSM & Oslo College-cooperation in teaching and research
2012/MoU/SSE/53	UDSM & Oslo and Akerhus College of Applied Sciences on research, teaching and student/staff exchange, and exchange of academic materials

²The Nile Basin Research Programme (which has temporarily stopped operating because of lack of funding) was one of the typical North-South research partnerships, which have brought together senior researchers from Nile Basin countries to research on a theme/research agenda predetermined by the University of Bergen's Research Department for four months and eventually produced a book.

2012/MoU/SSE/60	UDSM & University of Balearic Islands on research, staff and students exchange and exchange of information and publications
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Source: Adapted from *UDSM Register of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (2014)*

Data from the documents were analyzed through qualitative content analysis and by categorizing partnerships into North-South.

North-South Partnerships in Tanzania Public Universities

As of 2011³, there were 11 public universities and university colleges, and 21 private universities and university colleges in Tanzania. Although outnumbering public universities by more than half, private universities and university colleges enrolled only 42,390 students (31.2%), while public universities enrolled 92,977 students. The UDSM, which is comprised of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Campus (formerly Main Campus) and its two university colleges (Dar es Salaam University College of Education and Mkwawa University College of Education), enrolled a total of 20,383 students or 15% of the total student enrollment (Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2011).

Indeed, Tanzanian public universities have been grappling with a myriad of challenges, including decline in research productivity and low research publications despite several collaborative research projects embedded in the majority of partnerships. As Bailey, Cloete and Pillay (2011) conclude, Tanzania in general (the UDSM in particular) is constrained by the lack of research capacity that is necessary for significant socio-economic development. Other challenges facing the UDSM and other public universities are shortages of academic staff with doctorates, and academic staff in the professorial ranks. As the SARUA 2012 data indicate, only 49.3% of the academic staff in eight public universities in Tanzania had doctorates.

Many Tanzanian universities have attempted to address these challenges by establishing partnerships with foreign institutions. Each public university is free to establish university-wide external partnerships and links coordinated through Links and Projects Office or International Relations Office as part of the central administration. Individual academic units and individual academics also maintain partnerships and links, which are at times not synchronized with the university-wide partnerships and links. In the UDSM, for example, even though partnerships and links at both institutional and academic unit levels are supposed to be coordinated by the newly-created Directorate of International Relations, in practice, each academic structure/unit establishes and maintains its partnerships and links. In many cases, even partnerships established or solicited by individual academics are not reported or registered with the Directorate of International Relations for harmonization. I will further analyze this point below.

From 2007 to 2014, the UDSM established over 69 university-wide international partnerships and links (some completed and some on-going). Almost 80% of these exclusively focused on staff and student exchange, whereby foreign students, particularly undergraduate, pursued different short courses or semester/summer programs at the UDSM accompanied by their lecturers. Other activities featuring in the UDSM partnerships include (a) joint research projects/programs; (b) academic staff training through scholarships, fellowships, workshops and conferences mainly tenable in donor countries/universities; (c) exchange of information, publications and materials; and (d) joint organization of lectures, conferences, workshops and seminars. Partnerships and links at the UDSM should also be perceived in a wider context of the institution's strategies of

³The latest data on universities in Tanzania produced by the Tanzania Commission for Universities was published in 2011.

internationalization as a response to globalization, apart from being a key source of financing some of the university's core functions and activities. (See Table 3 for a list of the partnerships).

Table 3
Selected University-Wide Partnerships⁴ and Links at the UDSM, 2007-2012

Cooperating Foreign Institution	Nature of Partnership
Beijing Institute of Technology	Staff/student exchange, exchange of researchers, information and academic resources
Chonnam National University, South Korea	Research collaboration, staff/students exchange & language exchange program
Inter University Council of East Africa	Student/staff exchange
University Science, Humanities & Engineering Partnerships in Africa	Staff training
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria	Research, student/staff exchange, sabbaticals, establishment of new academic programs; information exchange and publications; joint conferences and workshops
Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern & Southern Africa	Collaborative research & training for social science
Oslo & Akerhus University College of Applied Sciences	Research, teaching, staff/student exchange and exchange of academic materials
University of Balearic Islands, Spain	Research, staff/student exchange, exchange of information and publications
University of Ghana	Student and staff exchange
University of Namibia	Research, staff/student exchange and information exchange
University of Natal, South Africa	Student exchange
University of Queensland, Australia	Joint research, staff/student exchange
Carleton University, Canada	Student exchange
University of Shanghai for Science & Technology	Staff/student exchange, joint research
Cologne University of Allied Sciences, German	Joint research, staff/student exchange
South-East University, China	Staff/student exchange
Peking University, China	Joint research, staff/student exchange
Beijing University, China	Joint research, staff/student exchange
The University of Jyväskylä, Finland	Joint research, staff/student exchange, establishment of new programs, exchange of information and publications
Technische University, Dresden, School of International Studies, Germany	Student exchange, exchange of information and publications

⁴“University-wide partnerships” in the context of this paper refers to partnerships whose operations are beyond an academic unit. Partnerships confined to schools, institutes and departments have been excluded from Table 1.

University of Leipzig, Germany	Staff/student exchange, joint lectures and seminars, joint research, and exchange of academic papers and journals
Kanagawa Institute of Technology, Japan	Joint research, staff/student exchange, sabbaticals, establishment of new programs; exchange of information and publications, joint organization of conferences and workshops
Chungbuk University, South Korea	Joint research, staff/student exchange, sabbaticals, establishment of new programs, exchange of information and publications & joint organization of conferences and workshops
Kangon University, South Korea	Exchange of academic materials, staff/student exchange and joint research
Pukyong National University, South Korea	Research, lectures, staff/student exchange, exchange of information and publications
Nanjing University of Information, Science & Technology, China	Research, staff/student exchange, sabbaticals and establishment of new programs
East China Normal University	Infrastructure development, development of academic programs, research, training and student exchange
Norwegian University of Technology, Norway	Joint research and training
University College of Dublin, Ireland	Joint supervision of doctorate students, research, staff/student exchange & exchange of information and publications
The University of Oslo, Norway	Joint research, staff/student exchange, establishment of new programs, exchange of information and publications, joint organization of conferences and workshops
University of the West Indies, Jamaica	Collaborative research, student/staff exchange
Aalsund University, Norway	Joint research, staff/student exchange, sabbaticals, exchange of information & publications, joint organization of conferences & workshops
The Georgetown University, USA	Student exchange, research, and exchange of information
Goteborg University, Sweden	Staff/student exchange and joint research
University of Uppsala, Sweden	Joint research and staff/student exchange
Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden	Joint teaching and research
Swedish International Development Agency	Training and research
University of Alberta, Canada	Staff/student exchange, research, seminar exchange and academic materials
University of Bedfordshire, UK	Curriculum development, staff development & joint research
Texas Southern University, USA	Research development, training, technology transfer and dissemination
Lutheran Colleges Consortium for Tanzania	Staff/student exchange
University of Florida, USA	Staff/student exchange, exchange of books with the UDSM Library
University of Minnesota, USA	Staff/student exchange
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA	Staff/student exchange
Louisiana State University, USA	Staff/student exchange, joint research

Prairie View A & M Texas University, USA	Staff/student exchange & joint research university
Michigan State University, East Lansing USA	Joint research, staff/student exchange & new academic programs
Rutgers State University, USA	Joint research

Source: Adapted from: UDSM (2007) *List of Universities/Institutions in Various Parts of the World with Which the UDSM Has Cooperation Links*. UDSM: Links and Projects Office; UDSM (2014) *Register of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)*, UDSM: Secretary to the Council Office.

The findings from this study and previous related research carried out by Ishengoma (2011, November & 2014) show that while extensive partnerships, links and external funding streams have been useful institutional survival strategies and key internationalization instruments in Tanzanian public universities, they have not significantly contributed to the strengthening of higher education space in Tanzania and perhaps in other African countries. The factors for the limited impact of North-South partnerships will be outlined in the next section.

Analysis: Partnerships and the Strengthening of Higher Education Space: Why Partnerships are Not Effective

Although there are a number of factors that render North-South higher education partnerships ineffective in Tanzania and in Africa; the major factor appears to be imbalance of power between North higher education institutions the donors (North higher education institutions) and the recipients (Tanzania public universities). As Downes (2013) affirms, North-South higher educational partnerships “are not founded on authentic dialogue in a horizontal relationship in which actors recognize each other as equals and participate in an exchange considered mutually useful and enriching by both parties” (p. 1). Beside this overriding factor, other related factors are also outlined below:

Lack of Reciprocity between Partners

First, with respect to the structure and nature, the majority of partnerships and links are not based on mutual negotiations between equal partners. As Gaillard (1994) writes: “one of the main problems encountered in the implementation of collaborative research programs relate to asymmetry of the collaboration and the dominance of the partners in the North” (p. 31).

These partnerships function within the donor aid framework where the donor is the Global North higher education institution and the recipient an African public university. The relationship between the donor (North institution) and the recipient (a university in the Global South) is neither reciprocal nor equal due to resource dependence. In practical terms, universities in the South have very little to offer to higher education institutions in the Global North in terms of financial, human or technological resources, a structural limitation which exacerbates inequalities in these partnerships.

Another example of lack of reciprocity in these partnerships concerns staff and student exchange, which are in favour of staff and students from Global North. For example, because of financial resource constraint, very rarely do staff or students from Tanzania public universities participate in exchange programs in the Global North with the exception of very limited student exchanges implemented under the auspices of the Inter University Council of East Africa.

Power Asymmetries and Self-Censorship

Ishengoma (2011, May & 2011, November) also observes that unequal power structure inherent in many donor-funded research partnerships and consultancies limit their impact on strengthening capacity in Tanzanian universities. The majority of partnerships are one-sided, giving more powers to external funders to determine research agenda and terms of references for consultancies. This unequal power structure results in self-censorship in reporting research and consultancies' findings among academics in Tanzania public universities. As noted in Ishengoma (2009), the tendency of self-censorship should be construed as a critical survival strategy to appease donors and funders to get more research and consultancy assignments to supplement inadequate salaries paid by governments. It was acknowledged as a serious problem in West African universities in a workshop on Academic Freedom in West African Universities, which took place between April 15-16, 2009 at the University of Ghana. Indeed, Samoff and Carroll (2004) alluded to the same problem when they argue,

With low basic salaries, individual researchers are highly motivated to become consultants to external agents. The fees for a few weeks of consulting may surpass several months' salary in their home country. Their commissioned research enables them to acquire computers, cars, and cellular telephones, to travel overseas and participate in international meetings and to escape overcrowded classrooms. (p.26)

While there is nothing wrong with individual researchers receiving short-term benefits from consultancies and research partnerships to mitigate underfunding of public universities, in the long-run, these individual benefits do not significantly contribute to long-term and sustainable institutional development that translates into strengthening of higher education space.

Conflicting Agendas and Interests

Furthermore, evidence from available data on the nature of the projects and links/partnerships in African universities reveals that just like donor aid in many African countries, the preferred modality for most of the North-South partnerships is project or programs, which in many cases are not focused on a coherent agenda in a single university. Project/program aid modality has inherent shortcomings, which limits its impact in the context of strengthening higher education space. These shortcomings should be conceptualized in the broader context of donor aid management and harmonization in Africa, but what is relevant to the North-South higher educational partnerships are uncoordinated interventions by different donors with each following independent systems and procedures for management, monitoring and evaluation; fragmented interventions (by different donors) resulting in reduced efficiency and effectiveness of the resources deployed; compromised transparency; lack of synchronization of interventions among various donors; and lack of alignment of projects to the recipient country's development strategy (AFRODAD, 2007, p.19-21). The above shortcomings also apply to North-South partnerships in African public universities where we see conflicting agendas and interests among different donors and their partner universities.

Related to the above constraints is the lack of clear goals and measurable outcomes of North-South partnerships. The case of the Partnership for Higher Education in African (PHEA), the largest donor-funded higher education partnership to be implemented in Sub Saharan Africa, illustrates this point. The PHEA was implemented in nine African countries: Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa. The PHEA is a \$440 million (USD) donor program funded by ten US-based foundations, which supported a host of unsynchronized activities including research in seventeen African universities and other related

higher education institutions (including the UDSM). In her evaluation of the PHEA, Parker (2010) reported the lack of clear goals and measurable outcomes as one of the most challenging aspects of the Partnership. She concludes that the partnership could have benefitted from more clarity and specificity in determining what it was meant to accomplish. The PHEA ended in 2010, apparently because of donor fatigue. Teferra (2004) observes that donor fatigue is a vestige of donor-recipient relationship in African universities. This same view was reiterated in Mamdani (2007) who argues that because of donor fatigue, African public universities have been compelled to undertake extra income generation activities, many of which are unrelated to core functions of universities

Brain Drain

Evidence also shows that some North-South research partnerships in Tanzania public universities have been counterproductive to capacity building because they contribute to both internal and external brain drain. For example, a study conducted at the UDSM by Ishengoma (2007) revealed that a substantial number of the senior members of the academic staff left the University to work for donor-funded research partnerships and projects or devoted most of their official working time to research partnerships/projects as consultants, and that in most cases, partnerships were treated as “private income generating projects” by respective coordinators. In the Tanzanian context, Mkude, Cooksey and Levey (2003) observe, “Senior academics (in Tanzania) are lured into the world of NGOs, consultancy and working for government and donors, leaving a major gap in the professorial ranks that cannot be filled in the short term without recruiting expatriate teachers or consultants”(p. 84).

In a broader context of donor-funded consultancies in African universities, Harle (2013) argues that the consultancy character inherent in many African universities is in a particularly damaging condition:

Limited funding for research, poor salaries, and the dysfunctions of university system for many years, coupled with the presence of many development agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seeking African expertise to advise and/or evaluate policies and programs, has led many academics to pursue consultancy work in the place of what might be considered more academic work. (p. 4)

These are typical cases of internal brain drain rampant in African public universities, which is not widely acknowledged in research and literature on academic brain drain. Internal brain drain depletes critical human resources necessary for expanding higher education space in African public universities and undermines the process of capacity building within these institutions.

Lack of Focus on the Critical Aspects of Strengthening Higher Education Space

The majority of partnerships in African public universities do not focus on activities and programs deemed critical in strengthening higher education space. For example, out of 51 UDSM partnerships presented in Table 3, only one focuses on infrastructure development (which in my view is critical in strengthening higher education space), and it is not stated in the MoU what type of infrastructure development was to be implemented and for which purpose. The data presented in Table 2 shows that there has been no international partnership focusing on improving the quality of higher education or thwarting brain drain and enhancing academic staff retention at the UDSM, which are the critical areas for strengthening higher education space.

While there has been substantial increase in investment in public universities in Tanzania through partnerships in recent years (manifested by increasing number of partnerships) the real impact of the increased investment is not visible at the institutional levels due to misalignments of

partnership and institutional development priorities. Misalignments of priorities in combination with other forces such as underfunding of public universities, laissez faire expansion of the higher education sector have limited the impact of partnerships in the context of strengthening higher education space in Tanzania.

Discussion

Why are the above challenges persisting in our public universities despite the existence of a multitude of partnerships and links? First, academic partnerships and research links in Tanzania public universities operate in foreign/donor aid framework of donors and recipients. This framework perpetuates dependency of public universities on donors. Like donor aid, which has not effectively worked in Tanzania for more than 50 years of independence, North-South partnerships are unlikely to strengthen higher education space, given their current structure.

Next, the majority of partnerships and links are unsynchronized and do not organically fit in the development paths, missions and visions of the recipient public universities. Different donors sponsor, or at times compete to sponsor, different or same projects that are not directly related or harmonized with the university-wide development agenda. The above challenge of partnerships in our public universities contradicts two fundamental principles of the *Paris Declaration* on aid effectiveness: the principles of alignment and the harmonization. The former states that donors should seek to align their support with priorities and strategies set by the partner countries (in our case public universities) rather than imposing their own priorities, and they should also use local systems in project implementation; while the latter requires donors to coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication of the projects (OECD, 2005).

In addition, partnerships and links in the majority of Tanzania public universities operate under obfuscation without clear guiding policies, standard operational procedures, and clear organizational structures. The above limitations are exacerbated by weak administrative capacity of partnerships because in most public universities partnerships are managed by some academic staff and administrative officers without requisite training in project management or international higher education or even international relations. In many cases, partnerships are limited to one-sided student exchange programs because it is always easier and cheaper for students from the North (donor) universities to study in Tanzania under exchange program rather than for Tanzanian students to study in a foreign university, which requires some cost contributions.

Contracted research and consultancy partnerships, the most popular form of partnerships in Tanzania public universities, apart from being one of the causes of internal brain drain, are inimical to academic freedom because of self-censorship among academics to please donors/universities. In the same context, Desai and Bohmke (1996) (cited in Bentley, Habib and Morrow, 2006) also argue that because of external funding, research agendas are no longer determined by scholars themselves but rather by sponsors, this means academics sell their research skills to the highest bidder, which consequently violates academic freedom.

Donor-funded partnerships have resulted in the uneven development of public universities, creating “rich” and “poor” universities in Tanzania. Some public universities (such as the UDSM) are donor-darlings⁵, which are favoured by donors compared to other universities. For example, the

⁵The concepts of donor-darlings and donor-orphans have been well articulated by Dom & Gordon (2011, November). In this paper, donor-darlings are universities which are favoured (for some reasons) or generously supported by external donors resulting in overconcentration of donor/aid in some few public universities, leaving others poorly supported, hence *donor-orphans*. In donor community parlance, some countries are aid/donor-darlings, implying that they are favoured by donors.

UDSM received 20 grants totaling \$15,672,891 from the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (2000-2010), compared to 5 grants totaling \$1,127,424 received by Sokoine University of Agriculture (Lewis, Friedman & Schoneboom, 2010). More partnerships and links in a public university translate into more resources for the institution; however, unequal development in public universities resulting from uneven distribution of partnerships is also reflected at different academic unit levels where some departments have more lucrative research partnerships and projects.

Although (ideally) partnerships are implemented after signing the memorandum of understanding by both partners; there are reasons to doubt whether Tanzanian public universities (recipients) have the power to negotiate as equal partners. The nature, structure and modality of the majority partnerships described in this paper limit their impact in terms of strengthening higher education space at the UDSM because they are not mutually negotiated, nor are they mutually beneficial and empowering. They are not aimed at solving the problems such as breaking the resource-dependent circle, restituting structural imbalances and exploitative relationships embedded in the majority of international higher education partnerships. Documentary and research evidence shows that the number of journal papers published by the UDSM academics, in spite of the existence of several joint/collaborative research partnerships, has decreased rather than increased for some years. For example, the number of journal papers published by UDSM academic staff at the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Campus slightly reduced from 309 (2008/09) to 298 in 2010/11 (Ishengoma, 2014).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the foregoing discussion, observation and literature, this article draws a primary conclusion and raises some critical questions which enable us to further contemplate the effectiveness of North-South partnerships in strengthening higher education space in African public universities. International higher education partnerships in African public universities operate within a wider framework of internationalization; however, evidence shows that higher education institutions in the Global South have been marginalized and disadvantaged because internationalization agenda are largely driven by the Global North. Furthermore, partnerships in Tanzania public universities are extensions of donor-aid dependency at the macro-level; they have ineffectively functioned for more than forty years since the country's independence, despite the fact that the country is one of the donor-darling countries.

One should argue that donor aid in developing economies like Tanzania is used to maintain neo-colonial relations, which exacerbate power asymmetries between Global North and Global South. Furthermore, the majority of donor-funded partnerships in public universities in Tanzania also operate in the form of projects or programs, which limits their sustainability and effectiveness. Documentary evidence shows that the lack of clear organizational structures in which partnerships operates in Tanzania public universities, weak administrative and management capacity of partnerships in public universities affect their effectiveness, hence their ability to strengthen higher education. Partnerships in public universities are fragmented and lack synchronization to allow a holistic higher education agenda critical to strengthening higher education space. Different donors compete to fund unsustainable higher education projects, which are in many cases not aligned to the development paths of recipient university. In some public universities, partnerships and links have been converted into personal income-generating projects for a few academics who manage them.

There are a number of recommendations based on the findings of this study. For partnerships and links to have significant impact on the strengthening of higher education space in Tanzania public universities, they should organically fit in the development paths, visions, and missions of the respective universities, and should be harmonized to address one critical agenda related to strengthening higher education space. Furthermore, for the partnerships to succeed in strengthening capacity, their administration, structure, modality and content should be drastically changed. A well-defined holistic, cross-cutting agenda addressing multifaceted constraints or challenges related to institutional development or growth is necessary.

Partnerships and links should be managed on the basis of the principles of *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*: (1) ownership, (2) alignment, (3) harmonization, (4) managing for (development) results, and (5) mutual accountability (OECD, 2005). North-South partnerships should also observe the principles of mutuality, transparency and reciprocity. As Root and Wiley (2003) argue, “international academic partnerships, if developed with mutuality, transparency and reciprocity are essential to building and enhancing the capacity of scholars in institutions” (p. 1). Finally, partnerships sponsors in Tanzania public universities should consider adopting *Delivering as One*, a UN reform involving streamlining programs in host country, focusing on critical areas where the UN can have a significant impact, reducing duplication of donor efforts and effectively using financial and human resources. Sponsors of partnerships in a single public university can streamline their projects or programs and focus on critical areas relevant to strengthening higher education space. Another alternative to *Delivering as One* is the *Basket-Funding* modality where several sponsors of partnerships support the implementation of a specific higher education activity or activities deemed critical in strengthening higher education space in a public university such as UDSM.

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